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SUBJECT: FIRST AFRICAN-ARAB TRADE UNION CONFERENCE

(ALGIERS OCT 16-22, 1977)

REF: STATE 275828, LONDON 19694

1. THE FOLLOWING SUMMARY OF THE AFRICAN-ARAB TRADE
UNION CONGRESS APPEARED IN THE WFTU'S "FLASHES FROM THE
TRADE UNIONS" IN AN ISSUE DATED IN PRAGUE NOVEMBER 16,
1977 WHICH SURFACED IN LONDON RECENTLY.

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2. QUOTE: DELEGATES FROM 44 NATIONAL TRADE UNION
CENTRES IN AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD, AND OBSERVERS FROM
SEVERAL INTERNATIONAL AND REGIONAL ORGANISATIONS TOOK
PART IN THIS CONFERENCE. IT MET TO ESTABLISH MORE
EFFECTIVE COOPERATION AND ACTIVE SOLIDARITY BETWEEN ARAB
AND AFRICAN WORKERS AND TRADE UNIONS IN THE FIGHT
AGAINST IMPERIALISM AND NEO-COLONIALISM, FOR THE CON-

SOLIDATION OF NATIONAL INDEPENDENCE, THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ORDER FOR SOCIAL PROGRESS, TRADE UNION LIBERTIES AND THE VITAL INTERESTS OF WORKERS. ONE OF THE MAIN QUESTIONS RAISED AT THE CONFERENCE WAS THAT OF ACTIVE SUPPORT FOR THE STRUGGLE OF THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN PEOPLES AND THE ARAB PEOPLE OF PALESTINE.

THE PARTICIPANTS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS: GENERAL POLICY DECLARATION, DECLARATION ON SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, DECLARATION ON THE PROBLEMS OF MIGRANT WORKERS AND PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR SOLIDARITY AND COOPERATION.

THE DOCUMENTS LAYED (SIC) PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON TRADE UNION AND DEMOCRATIC LIBERTIES AS "AN URGENT NEED OF OUR TIMES."

THE CONFERENCE CONDEMNED THE ATTEMPTS BY SOME ARAB AND AFRICAN REGIMES TO DOMINATE TRADE UNIONS IN ORDER TO MANIPULATE THEM FOR THE BENEFIT OF TRANSNATIONAL COMPANIES. THE CONFERENCE STRESSED THAT AUTHENTIC LIBERATION OF PEOPLE IMPLIES A DEMOCRATISATION OF NATIONAL INSTITUTIONS. SUCH A DEMOCRATISATION WOULD ENABLE WORKERS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE PART IN THE CONCEPTION, MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF ALL TYPES OF ACTIVITY. THE CONFERENCE STATED THAT DECOLONISATION LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TION SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY "A CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT IN THE LIVING STANDARDS OF THE WORKERS AND THE DEPRIVED MASS OF THE POPULATION, PARTICULARLY AS FAR AS BASIC NEEDS ARE CONCERNED -- I.E. FOOD, HOUSING, HEALTH AND EDUCATION.

THE CONFERENCE DECIDED TO SET UP A COMMITTEE OF ACTION AND SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLING PEOPLES OF SOUTH AFRICA AND PALESTINE, AND ALSO AN ARAB-AFRICAN TRADE UNION COORDINATION AND COOPERATION COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE EXCHANGE OF EXPERIENCE AND INFORMATION, WORKERS' EDUCATION, TRADE UNION TRAINING AND OTHER SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC QUESTIONS.

THE CONFERENCE NOTED THE GROWING ROLE OF THE WORKING CLASS IN THE POLITICAL AND SOCIAL LIFE OF ARAB AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES. A. BENNIKOUS, THE CONFERENCE CHAIRMAN AND GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE GENERAL FEDERATION OF ALGERIAN WORKERS, SAID IN HIS SPEECH AT THE PLENARY SESSION, "THE MODERN WORLD IS CHARACTERISED MORE THAN EVER BY THE HEIGHTENING OF THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE FORCES OF PROGRESS AND FREEDOM

ON THE ONE HAND, AND THE FORCES OF FEUDALISM AND REACTION ON THE OTHER. IN THIS STRUGGLE, WHICH EXTENDS TO ALL SPHERES OF SOCIAL ACTIVITY, THE ARAB AND AFRICAN WORKING CLASS IS PLAYING AN IMPORTANT AND EFFECTIVE ROLE."

THE CONFERENCE MARKED AN IMPORTANT STEP ON THE ROAD TO STRENGTHENING AND EXTENDING JOINT AND UNITED ACTIONS BETWEEN THE OATUU AND ICATU, AND AMONG ALL THE TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS OF ARAB AND AFRICAN COUNTRIES. IT ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION SOLIDARITY.

IN THE GENERAL POLICY DECLARATION ONE READS,
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"THE CONFERENCE REAFFIRMS THE ACTIVE SOLIDARITY OF THE AFRICAN AND ARAB WORKERS WITH THE PEOPLES OF LATIN AMERICA, ASIA AND EUROPE, AND ISSUES AN URGENT APPEAL FOR THE STRENGTHENING OF COOPERATION AND UNITED ACTION AMONG ALL WORKERS AND THEIR TRADE UNIONS IN THE STRUGGLE FOR DEMOCRACY, SOCIAL PROGRESS, JUSTICE, PEACE AND SOCIALISM." END QUOTE BREWSTER UNQTE CHRISTOPHER

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